

## Message Text

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ACTION HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 INR-07 IO-13 MED-02 NSAE-00 PA-01

DHA-02 SCA-01 OES-06 USIA-06 PRS-01 CIAE-00 AID-05

DODE-00 SCS-03 /061 W

-----061100Z 090101 /12

R 060820Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4559

INFO CINCPACREPPHIL SUBIC

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AID FOR CDC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, RP

SUBJECT: HEALTH: STATUS REPORT ON PENICILLIN-RESISTANT GONORRHEA

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY. THIS CABLE PRESENTS A BRIEF HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS REPORT CONCERNING SUBJECT AREA. RECENT PRESS RELEASES AND REPORTS BY PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL GROUPS HAVE CALLED ATTENTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PENICILLIN-RESISTANT GONORRHEA IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD AND HAVE SPECIFICALLY FOCUSED ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM THE PHILIPPINES. WHILE REPORTS CONCERNING THE RESISTANT STRAIN HERE HAVE FOCUSED ON THE AREAS OF THE CLARK AND SUBIC BASES, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE STRAIN HAS PROBABLY SPREAD IN THE PHILIPPINES. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PHILIPPINES (GOP), U.S. OFFICIAL PERSONNEL AND WHO OFFICIALS ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO BETTER IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM AND TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO WHAT PROMISES TO BE A LONG-TERM DISEASE CONTROL ISSUE HERE. THE GOP HAS EVINCE SENSITIVITY ABOUT THIS PROBLEM -- PERHAPS BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE

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TOURIST INDUSTRY -- AND HAS ASKED THAT PUBLICITY BE MINIMIZED AT THIS TIME.

2. BACKGROUND. THE RELATIVELY SOPHISTICATED MEDICAL SYSTEMS AND RECORDS AT CLARK AIR BASE AND SUBIC NAVAL BASE IN THE PHILIPPINES HAVE DETECTED A VERY SIGNIFICANT RISE IN THE INCIDENCE OF PENICILLIN-RESISTANT GONORRHEA

CASES BEGINNING ABOUT APRIL 1976. THE RESISTANT STRAIN ACCOUNTS FOR APPROXIMATELY 50 PERCENT OF THE 300 MONTHLY CASES REPORTED AT CLARK AND BETWEEN 20 PERCENT TO 30 PERCENT OF THE 1,000 CASES REPORTED MONTHLY AT SUBIC AT THE PRESENT TIME. THE JULY-SEPTEMBER 1976 VISIT OF DR. PETER PEIREN OF THE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL CENTER IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, RESULTED IN THE CLEAR IDENTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE RESISTANT STRAIN OF GONORRHEA AND BROUGHT THIS PROBLEM TO THE ATTENTION OF THE US, GOP AND WHO OFFICIALS. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS VISIT, BOTH CLARK AND SUBIC BASES INTENSIFIED THEIR EFFORTS TO DIAGNOSE, TREAT AND CONTROL THE RESISTANT STRAIN OF GONORRHEA, INVOLVING CLOSE TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMANDS AND THE TECHNICAL INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM DCD. IN DECEMBER 1976, THE EMBASSY REQUESTED DR. GEROLD VAN DER VLUGT, USAID PUBLIC HEALTH PHYSICIAN, TO ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE GOP DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WHO, AS WELL AS WITH U.S. BASES MEDICAL PERSONNEL, IN AN EFFORT TO BETTER IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM AND COORDINATE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSES. IN ADDITION, CDC FUNDED THE TRAVEL OF DR. VIRGINIA BASACA SEVILLA OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH OFFICE TO VISIT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH AND THE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL CENTER IN THE UNITED STATES IN AN EFFORT TO FURTHER DEVELOP EFFECTIVE GOP ACTION.

3. CURRENT STATUS. THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE PLANNED OR ARE UNDERWAY:

A. AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOP ALL PARTIES HERE HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AGREED TO WITHHOLD FURTHER PRESS RELEASES AND STRICTLY LIMIT PUBLICITY UNTIL THE SITUATION IS BETTER CLARIFIED.

B. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS APPOINTED DR. FLORENCIO GOMEZ, REGIONAL HEALTH DIRECTOR OF THE REGION WHICH INCLUDES CLARK AND SUBIC BASES, TO COORDINATE GOP IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL EFFORTS WITH THE TWO BASES.

C. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IS CONDUCTING A CONFIDENTIAL DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY OF GREATER MANILA AND OTHER AREAS USING LABORATORY CULTURE TECHNIQUES TO DETERMINE THE INCIDENCE OF PENICILLIN-RESISTANT GONORRHEA IN THESE AREAS. THE HIGH PERCENTAGE OF NON-REGISTERED, POTENTIAL FEMALE

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ACTION HEW-06

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CARRIERS, IDENTIFIED IN THE CLARK AND SUBIC BASE AREAS AND THEIR KNOWN MOBILITY, INDICATE THE RESISTANT STRAIN IS PROBABLY WIDELY SPREAD IN THE PHILIPPINES.

D. DR. GEORGES CAUSSE, CHIEF OF THE VENEREAL DISEASE AND TREPONEMATOSIS DIVISION OF WHO GENEVA, WILL VISIT THE PHILIPPINES ON OR ABOUT JANUARY 10 FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH GOP OFFICIALS.

E. DR. BASACA SEVILLA IS PREPARING A TRIP REPORT WITH SEVERAL KEY RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE TOP LEVELS OF THE GOP.

F. DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT FOR THE PENICILLIN-RESISTANT GONORRHEA WILL BE CONTINUALLY REVIEWED WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON IMPROVING GOP CAPABILITY. AN EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO ASSESS TRAINING AND RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE COORDINATED PROGRAM.

4. FOLLOWING RESULTS OF THE WORK GROUP UNDER DR. GOMEZ, DR. BASACA SEVILLA'S REPORT AND THE VISIT BY DR. CAUSSE OF WHO, IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP A MORE DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND FORMULATE A COORDINATED PLAN OF ACTION FOR WHAT PROMISES  
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TO BE A LONG-TERM DISEASE CONTROL PROBLEM.  
WE SHALL CONTINUE TO REPORT SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS.

5. COMMENT AND ACTION REQUESTED. GOP OFFICIALS HAVE EVINCED SENSITIVITY ABOUT PUBLICITY CONCERNING THESE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH MIGHT SHOW PHILIPPINES IN UNFAVORABLE

LIGHT AND WHICH COULD HAVE ADVERSE IMPACT ON IMPORTANT  
TOURIST INDUSTRY. EMBASSY SUGGESTS U.S. AGENCIES MINIMIZE  
PUBLIC COMMENT CONCERNING RESISTANT STRAIN IN PHILIPPINES  
AT THIS TIME.  
SULLIVAN

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